DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 703 HE 004 745

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| AUTHOR | Biggs, Donald A.; Barnhart, William J. |
| TITLE | Urban Citizens and a University after a Serious Campus Disturbance. University of Minnesota Office for Student Affairs Research Bulletin, Volume 13, Number 4, December 28, 1972. |
| INSTITUTION | Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Office for Student Affairs. |
| REPORT NO | RB-Vol-13-No-4 |
| PUB DATE | 28 Dec 72 |
| NOTE | 14p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Activism; *Civil Disobedience; *Community Attitudes; *Demonstrations (Civil); *Higher Education; Research Projects; Universities |

ABSTRACT

This study looks at 282 urban citizens' attitudes about campus dissent, attitudes about the legitimacy of a campus disturbance, and their satisfaction with a University soon after a serious campus disturbance. A majority of urban citizens were satisfied with the University. Their beliefs about the University were heavily related to their satisfaction. Younger, more educated citizens as well as those with more University-related experiences and those with more positive attitudes about campus freedom of expression have more positive attitudes about campus dissent. Most urban citizens did not consider the campus disturbance to be a legitimate form of social protest. Urban citizens with more positive attitudes about campus dissent and those who did not believe that many subversive activities were going on at the University were more apt to view the disturbance as a legitimate form of social protest. (Author)

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office for student affairs RESEARCH BULLETIN

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## Abstract

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A majority of urban citizens were satisfied with the University. Their beliefs about the University were heavily related to their satisfaction. Younger, more educated citizens as well as those with more University-related experiences and those with more postive attitudes about campus freedom of expression have more positive attitudes about campus dissent. Most urban citizens did not consider the campus disturbance to be a legitimate form of social protest. Urban citizens with more positive attitudes about campus dissent and those who did not believe that many subversive activities were going on at the University were more apt to view the disturbance as a legitimate form of social protest.

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HE 004 745

university of minnesota Volume 13 Number 4 December 28, 1972

# Urban Citizens and a University after a Serious Campus Disturbance

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In two previous research studies (Biggs and Barnhart, 1972a; Biggs and Barnhart, 1972b), we examined citizens' satisfaction with a University and their attitudes about campus dissent. Very soon after the data for these studies were collected, the University of Minnesota erupted in a week of serious campus disturbances. These May 1972 disturbances followed the President's decision to mine Hai Phong harbor. The disturbances focused the attention of many citizens on the University and supposedly had some effects on their attitudes and opinions about the institution. This study looks at citizens' satisfaction with the University and their attitudes about campus dissent very soon after this May 1972 campus disturbance. We also examined urban citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of this campus disturbance.

Campus disturbances can have a number of effects on citizens. Some would argue that citizens become dissatisfied with universities as a result of incidents of campus dissent. But even though this assumption seems reasonable, we know little about the factors which influence citizens' satisfaction with a university either before or after a disturbance. At a time when the University of Minnesota had not experienced any recent campus disturbances, Biggs and Barnhart (1972a) reported that urban citizens' satisfaction with the University was most heavily related to their beliefs about campus life. It would also seem reasonable that citizens' attitudes about campus dissent would change after they experienced a campus disturbance, yet, here again, we know little about the effects of a disturbance on citizens' attitudes about campus dissent. Biggs and Barnhart (1972b) reported

that in a time of relative campus "peace and quiet," urban citizens' attitudes about campus dissent are moderately influenced by their attitudes about campus freedom of expression.

The impact of a campus disturbance on citizens' attitudes and opinions depends on whether or not they perceive the events as legitimate acts of social protest (Turner, 1969). The nature of citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of a campus disturbance will influence their subsequent support for repression or reform. Turner (1969) described conditions under which one group of people will define events as disturbances and another group will define them as social protest. Events must be credible in relation to folk-concepts of social protest and/or they must communicate more appeal than threat components. Disturbances may also be interpreted as social protest as a gesture of conciliation; or third parties may interpret disturbances as protests as a means of inviting protestors to form a coalition; and finally, public officials may define disturbances as social protest in order to establish bargaining relationships. Notwithstanding the validity of Turner's theory, individuals may also differ in their attitudes about the legitimacy of a campus disturbance because of differences in their characteristics and their experiences. We would expect that urban citizens differed in their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May 1972 campus disturbance depending on their socio-demographic background, their University-related experiences, their other relevant social attitudes, and their beliefs about campus life.

This investigation looks at the multi-variate relationships between a number of personal and social characteristics of urban citizens and three dependent variables: Satisfaction with a University, attitudes about campus dissent, and attitudes about the legitimacy of the May 1972 campus disturbance. Four categories of independent variables used in each of the analyses were: (1) socio-demographic characteristics; (2) number and kind of University-related experiences; (3) relevant social attitudes; and (4) descriptive

beliefs about the University.

## Method

### Sample

A sample of 480 citizens (heads of households) were randomly selected from the city directories of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and all immediate suburbs, except three which contained less than 1% of the total population of the Twin Cities area. Of the original sample, 83 had moved from the Twin Cities. The final sample included 397 citizens. A comparison of the major demographic characteristics of the sample with the sample used in similar studies (Biggs and Barnhart, 1972a; Biggs and Barnhart, 1972b) conducted prior to the demonstration revealed no significant differences in the characteristics of the two samples.

Questionnaires were completed by 71% (N = 282) of the citizens. The major part of the campus demonstration began May 9, 1972, the first mailing was May 15, and the last mailing was May 29, 1972.

Seventy-three percent of the sample were males, mean age was 42 years and the range was from 19 years to 81 years. Seventy-three percent of the sample were married, 17% single, 6% divorced, 4% widowed and .4% were separated. Twenty-five percent had some college, 18% completed business or trade school, 17% were high school graduates and 18% were college graduates. Only 34% had ever attended the University, and 11% were graduates of the University. Twenty-five percent of the sample were skilled workers, 15% were in managerial positions, 16% were professionals, 10% were in sales, 9% were semi-skilled workers, 5% were unskilled workers, 5% were office or clerical workers, 7% were retired and 2% were students.

Most (94%) had never been employed at the University and most (90%) never had any members of their families employed at the University. Size of families for the people in the sample ranged from 1 to 14; the modal size was two. Fifteen had one child who graduated from the University Twin Cities campus, and two had two children who graduated from that campus. Forty-three percent of the sample was Democrats, 28% was Independents and 30% was Republicans.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire asked about the respondent's background: Age, sex, education, occupation, marital status, political affiliation, and type of educational or work relationship to the University. Respondents also indicated their main sources of information about the University. Previous research (Biggs and Barnhart, 1972a, 1972b) indicated that all of the scales used in the questionnaire had adequate internal consistency.

They reported the number of times (never, once or twice, a few times, several times, many times) they had each of 12 University-related experiences. These experiences included attendance at campus classes, sports events and lectures; visiting University hospitals; talking to students, faculty and/or staff; campus sightseeing; attendance at off-campus events sponsored by the University, and at lectures by University faculty or staff.

Respondents completed a measure of general social alienation (Srole, 1956). They completed a campus freedom of expression scale (Biggs and Vaughan, 1971; Biggs, Vaughan and Donart, 1971) which contained questions about the freedom of students and faculty to express their opinions and to sponsor controversial lectures on campus.

They completed an eight item measure of attitudes about campus dissent (Biggs and Vaughan, 1971; Biggs, Vaughan and Donart, 1971). They reported if they favored or were opposed to the goals and tactics of student activists in different situations. Goals included civil rights and anti-war activities, as well as the provision of birth control information to students. Methods included lectures, sit-ins, meetings, picketing and occupying buildings.

Respondents reported their general satisfaction with the University, with the conduct of the majority of University students, with the University's handling of cases of student misconduct, with the type of education students receive at the University, with the

University faculty, with how the University is administered, and with the moral and ethical development of University students.

Respondents reported whether 25 descriptive beliefs about University life were very true, probably true, undecided, probably false or definitely false. Items dealt with University students, faculty, and administrators as well as University policies.

Finally, respondents indicated on a five-point scale if they thought the demonstrations were legitimate acts of protest, if the demonstrators were only interested in creating disruptions, if the people arrested in the demonstrations should be treated like other law breakers, and if law enforcement officials were as responsible for the violence as were the students. Internal consistency for these items was adequate ($\alpha$ = .86). They also reported if they thought University officials should have closed the University during the demonstrations, what percentage of the anti-war demonstrators were not students, and what percentage of students at the University were in agreement with the anti-war demonstrators.

Statistical Analysis

Multiple regression analyses and chi square were used to observe relationships between experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and background characteristics of citizens and their satisfaction with the University, their attitudes about campus dissent and their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May 1972 campus disturbance. Dummy variables (Suits, 1957) were used in some multiple regression analyses. Dependent variables were satisfaction score, attitudes about campus dissent score, and attitudes about the legitimacy of the campus disturbance score. In some analyses, t tests were used to examine differences between mean scores.

## Results

Satisfaction with the University

Fifty-nine percent of the citizens were satisfied or more than satisfied with the

University; 77% were satisfied or more than satisfied with the way the majority of University students conduct themselves; 42% were satisfied or more than satisfied with the way the University handles cases of student misconduct; 77% were satisfied or more than satisfied with the education students receive at the University; 72% were satisfied or more than satisfied with most of the faculty; 59% were satisfied or more than satisfied with the manner in which the University is administered; and 56% were satisfied or more than satisfied with the moral and ethical development of most University students.

We compared the total satisfaction with the University score with the score for a sample of urban citizens surveyed prior to the May 1972 demonstration (Biggs and Barnhart, 1972a). We found no difference ($t = -1.46$; $p \leq .14$) in urban citizens' satisfaction with the University after the May 1972 campus disturbance.

Age, sex, size of family, level of education, occupation level, marital status, attendance at the University, employment at the University, and number of acquaintances employed at the University, were slightly related ($R = .21$) to urban citizens' satisfaction with the University. However, these socio-demographic characteristics account for only 4% of the variance in satisfaction with the University.

The number of University-related experiences which urban citizens have had was slightly related ($R = .24$) to their level of satisfaction with the University. Still, number of experiences only accounts for 5% of the variance in citizens' satisfaction with the University. The number of times citizens attended plays, concerts, or lectures on the University campus makes the largest relative contribution (3% of the variance) to explaining differences in their satisfaction with the University.

Feelings of alienation, attitudes about campus dissent, and attitudes about campus freedom of expression had a slight relationship ($R = .36$) to citizens' satisfaction with the University. Differences in these attitudes account for about 13% of the variance in satisfaction with the University. Attitudes about campus freedom of expression make the

largest relative contribution (9% of the variance) to explaining differences in citizens' satisfaction with the University.

Urban citizens' descriptive beliefs about the University were heavily related to their satisfaction with the University ($R = .72$). These beliefs account for 52% of the variance in satisfaction. We trichotomized the citizens by their total score on the satisfaction scale into the lowest 20%, the middle 60%, and the top 20%. Urban citizens who were least satisfied with the University more often believed that administrators and faculty managing the University ignore the needs of many citizens ($X^2 = 43.97$; $p \leq .005$); militant student radicals have considerable power at the University ($X^2 = 35.62$; $p \leq .005$); University professors try to influence students' political and social viewpoints ($X^2 = 32.42$; $p \leq .005$); many subversive activities are going on at the University ($X^2 = 30.60$; $p \leq .005$); black students have a great deal of influence on the administration ($X^2 = 23.74$; $p \leq .005$); and many University courses and programs have little or no relation to the real world ($X^2 = 19.49$; $p \leq .005$).

We compared these citizens' beliefs about the University with the beliefs of a similar sample of citizens surveyed prior to the May disturbance (Biggs and Barnhart, 1972a). After the disturbance, more citizens believed that many subversive activities are going on at the University ($X^2 = 8.47$; $p \leq .05$), and that many University professors spend little time teaching ($X^2 = 6.58$; $p \leq .05$). Surprisingly, after the campus disturbance, more citizens did not believe that most University students are concerned with social and political action ($X^2 = 9.14$; $p \leq .05$).

Attitudes about Campus Dissent

A majority (70%) of citizens support the goals and methods of students who hold meetings with University administrators because they think the admissions policies discriminate against black students. Fifty-three percent support the goals of these students if they occupy a building, destroy records and forcefully keep others from

entering the building; and 55% support these goals if students hold a "sit-in."

A majority (66%) of citizens support the goals and methods of students who sponsor lectures on Southeast Asia as a means of expressing their disagreement with the U. S. involvement in Vietnam. Forty-two percent support the goals of these students if they picket classes and try to persuade others to stay out of classes, and 60% support these goals if students occupy a building, destroy records and forcefully keep others from entering the building.

Fifty-eight percent of the citizens support the goals but oppose the methods of students (holding a sit-in) who think the University should provide birth control information, while 23% support the goals but oppose the methods of students (holding a sit-in) who think the University should not allow Army recruiters to use their facilities.

We found no significant difference between these citizens' mean score on attitudes about campus dissent as compared with the mean score for a similar sample of citizens surveyed prior to the May 1972 campus demonstration (t value = -.12; $p \leq .90$).

Age, education level, sex, size of family, occupation level, marital status, and whether they themselves, their family, their acquaintances, or their friends were employed at the University were moderately related (R = .52) to urban citizens' attitudes about campus dissent. The variance in these socio-demographic characteristics accounts for 27% of the variance in attitudes about campus dissent. Differences in the ages of citizens make the largest relative contribution (12% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about campus dissent. Differences in the level of education of citizens account for 10% of the variance in their attitudes about campus dissent. Older citizens tend to have more negative attitudes about campus dissent, while more well educated citizens tend to have more positive attitudes about campus dissent.

Urban citizens' number of University-related experiences was moderately related (R = .40) to their attitudes about campus dissent. The number of University-related experiences accounts for 16% of the variance in citizens' attitudes about campus dissent. Differences among citizens in the number of times they had attended plays, concerts, or

lectures on the University campus make the largest relative contribution (7% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about campus dissent. Those citizens who attend more of these events tend to have more positive attitudes about campus dissent.

Citizens' attitudes about campus freedom of expression were moderately related ($r = .54$) to their attitudes about campus dissent. Twenty-nine percent of the variance in citizens' attitudes about campus dissent can be accounted for by differences in their attitudes about campus freedom of expression. As might be expected, those citizens with more liberal attitudes about campus freedom of expression tend to have more favorable attitudes about campus dissent.

Urban citizens' descriptive beliefs about University life were moderately related ($R = .60$) to their attitudes about campus dissent. Thirty-five percent of the variance in attitudes about campus dissent can be accounted for by differences in citizens' beliefs about the University. Differences among citizens as regards to whether they believed many subversive activities were going on at the University made the largest relative contribution (16% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about campus dissent.

We trichotomized the citizens by their total score on the attitudes about campus dissent scale into the lowest 20%, the middle 60%, and the top 20%. Urban citizens who have the most negative attitudes about campus dissent more often believed that many subversive activities are going on at the University ($X^2 = 37.15$; $p \leq .005$); militant student radicals have considerable power at the University ($X^2 = 32.98$; $p \leq .005$); black students have a great deal of influence on the University administrators ($X^2 = 22.33$; $p \leq .005$); and administrators and faculty managing the University ignore the needs of many citizens ($X^2 = 16.30$; $p \leq .01$).

Attitudes about the Legitimacy of the May Campus Demonstrations

Sixty-six percent of the citizens did not think that the May 1972 campus disturbance was a legitimate act of protest against the war in Vietnam; 71% thought that many of the people involved in the demonstration were concerned with nothing more than creating disruption;

78% thought that people arrested in the demonstrations should be treated like other law breakers and given no special favors; and only 24% thought that law enforcement officials were as responsible for the violence as were the students. Seventy percent did not think the University should have been closed during the demonstration. The typical citizen thought that about 38% of the participants in the demonstration were not students, and that only 34% of the students at the University were in agreement with the demonstrators.

Age, education, sex, size of family, marital status, occupational level, attendance at the University and employment at the University were somewhat related (R = .38) to urban citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May campus disturbance. Fifteen percent of the variance in citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance was accounted for by differences in these socio-demographic characteristics. Education level (6% of the variance) and age (5% of the variance) make the largest relative contributions to explaining differences in citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. More well educated citizens and younger citizens were apt to consider the disturbance to be a legitimate form of social protest.

Urban citizens' number of University-related experiences was moderately related (R = .44) to their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. The number of University-related experiences accounts for 20% of the variance in citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. The number of times citizens have attended concerts, plays, and lectures on campus makes the largest relative contribution (10% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. Citizens who attended more of these campus events were more apt to consider the disturbance a legitimate act of social protest.

Feelings of alienation, attitudes about campus dissent, and attitudes about campus freedom of expression were moderately related (R = .65) to citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. The variance in these social attitudes accounts for 43% of the variance in citizens' attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance.

Citizens' attitudes about campus dissent make the largest relative contribution (26% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. As might be expected, citizens with more positive attitudes about campus dissent were more apt to consider the May disturbance a legitimate act of social protest.

Urban citizens' beliefs about University life were moderately related ($R = .55$) to their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. These beliefs account for 31% of the variance in attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. Differences among citizens as regards to whether they believed that there were many subversive activities on campus made the largest relative contribution (18% of the variance) to explaining differences in their attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance. The more citizens believed that many subversive activities were going on at the University the more apt they were to consider the May demonstration not to be a legitimate form of social protest.

We trichotomized the citizens by their total score on the attitudes about the legitimacy of the May disturbance scale into thirds. Urban citizens who were least apt to consider the May 1972 campus disturbance a legitimate act of social protest more often believed that many subversive activities are going on at the University ($X^2 = 46.\ldots$; $p \leq .000$); militant student radicals have considerable power at the University ($X^2 = 31.50$; $p \leq .001$); administrators and faculty managing the University ignore the needs of many citizens ($X^2 = 19.53$; $p \leq .001$); black students have a great deal of influence on the University administration ($X^2 = 17.56$; $p \leq .001$); and professors try to influence students' political and social viewpoints ($X^2 = 14.63$; $p \leq .005$).

## Discussion and Conclusion

Urban citizens' satisfaction with a university does not change after a campus disturbance. Citizens' satisfaction before and after a campus disturbance is mostly influenced

by their beliefs about university life. Urban citizens' attitudes about campus dissent do not change following a campus disturbance. However, many of the factors influencing their attitudes about campus dissent do change in importance (Biggs and Barnhart 1972b). After the campus disturbance, citizens' socio-demographic characteristics and their number of University-related experiences were more significantly related to their attitudes about campus dissent. Dissatisfied citizens and those with the most negative attitudes about campus dissent seem to be concerned that the management of the University does not reflect the needs of many citizens. Citizens with more negative attitudes about campus dissent had very similar beliefs about the University to those of citizens who were most dissatisfied with the University. Both groups seem to be concerned that black students, student radicals, and even Communists, may have too much influence power on campus.

Most of the urban citizens did not consider the May campus disturbance to be a legitimate form of social protest. Interestingly enough, the typical citizen did not think that the majority of University students was in agreement with the demonstrators. However, younger and better educated citizens as well as those with a larger number of University-related experiences tend to view the disturbance as a legitimate form of social protest. Citizens with more favorable attitudes about campus dissent and those citizens who did not believe that many subversive activities were going on at the University also tend to view the disturbance as a legitimate form of social protest.

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